

## IN THE COURTROOM WITH ELLEN GATES STARR —SHE'S A LITTLE WOMAN WITH A BIG HEART

BY JANE WHITAKER

I sat behind her in the courtroom presided over by Judge Martin, and she seemed such a little woman, Ellen Gates Starr of Hull House, who is on trial charged with interfering with a police officer in the performance of his duty, that I speculated idly where in her small, rather frail body she stored up such a wonderful amount of sympathy for the striking waitresses at Henrief's that she smiled over a situation she has never before confronted.

Then I crossed over and sat down beside her, and asked her if she would talk to me about the situation for a few moments while the court was taking a recess.

And while she talked I began to feel the magnetism of her, the power of her, the strength of her. I knew that if I closed my eyes I would have a mental picture of a giant like the ones we loved to look at in picture books in our childhood days.

"I did not go on the picket line as a representative of Hull House," she said. "I went on as an individual after a meeting had been held at Hull House, at which Miss Jane Addams presided, when the question of police brutality was discussed.

"I want to see if the alleged brutality was still carried on, and I felt that my presence on Randolph street might act as a deterrent. When some one is present in such a situation who comes from the outside it has that effect."

She paused and laughed quietly.

"It is very funny to sit here and listen to the terrible things I am supposed to have done. Do you know they testify that I stamped my feet and waved my hands in the air and screamed at the top of my voice?

"And the things I am supposed to have said, they are very funny. I wish you would quote what I said correctly, because it has always been misquoted, and I know exactly what I said because I knew it before I went there. It was: 'As an American citizen I protest against the arrest of these persons who are doing nothing contrary to the law.'

"And then I was arrested. And at the station they booked me on a charge of disorderly conduct, but they have evidently realized that they could not substantiate that charge, so they have changed it to 'interference with an officer in the performance of his duty.'

"I believe in the organization of the working people. The employers are organized and strongly organized. It

is the employers' union that is back of Henrief. We have only organization through which to fight. They have left us nothing else.

"It was not my purpose to break any law, even a bad law, and I maintain that I have broken no law.

"I believe in the right of free speech and I was exercising that right. The girls were doing the same thing.

"As you know, at the beginning of this affair, Collins spent a large sum of money putting advertisements in the paper, which were practically statements of his side of the controversy.

"The waitresses on strike were not able to spend money this way. They could not get publicity through the newspapers and so they were reduced to getting it by telling people on the street their side of the story, and they were within their rights.

"I have spent much of my time since my arrest going to courts in an effort to get a trial and it was necessary to use a great deal of persuasion to get it even at this time."

And just then Judge Martin ad-